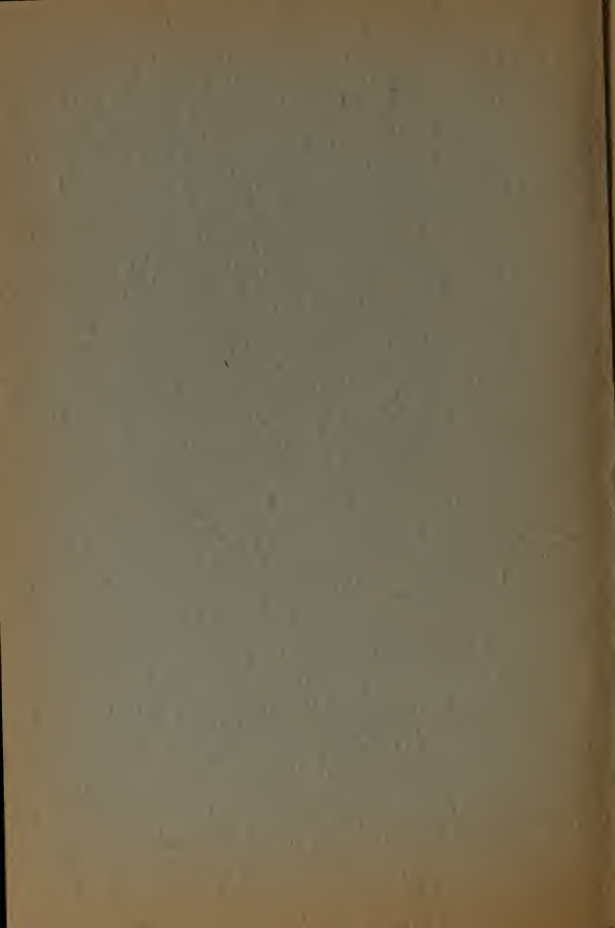


LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 132
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

History and Beliefs of the Major Religions

Warren Scholl



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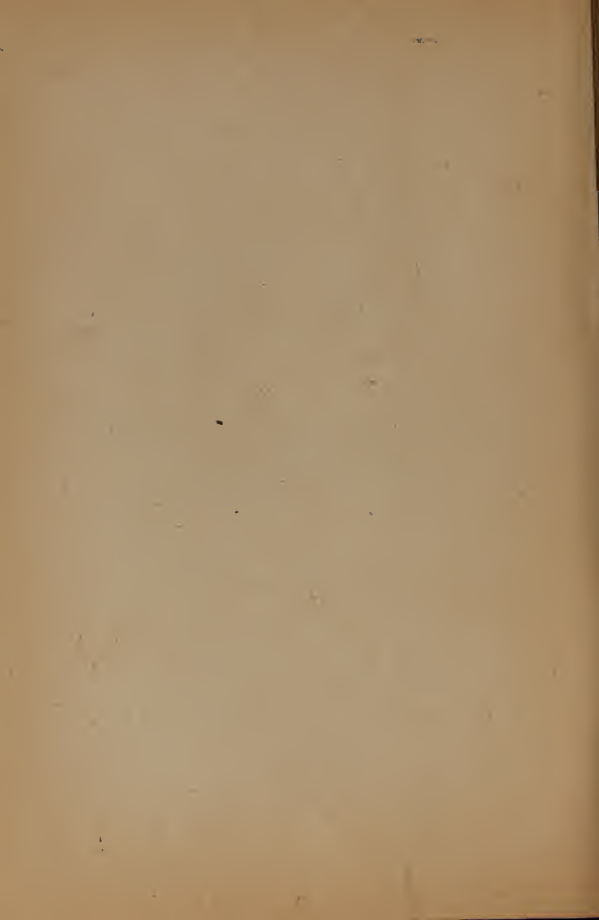
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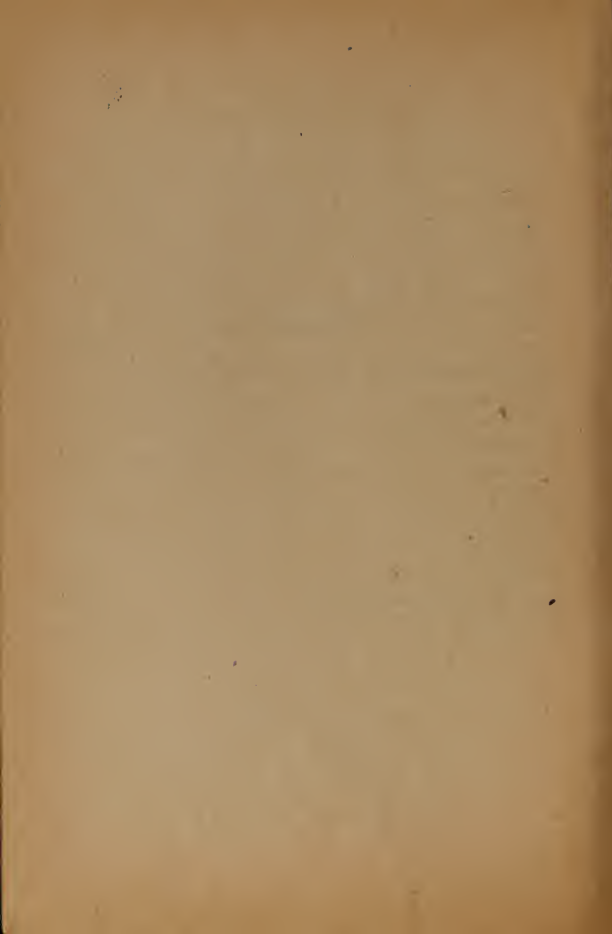
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HISTORY AND BELIEFS OF THE
MAJOR RELIGIONS



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HISTORY AND BELIEFS OF THE MAJOR RELIGIONS

WHOSE HERETIC ARE YOU?

Most of us believe that we have a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, so long as we permit others to live, be free and pursue happiness. However, most every great religious system seems to cherish the idea that the Supreme Power has revealed to that system alone, exactly how men should live and pursue happiness. Consequently, the orthodox follower of one religion considers that the members of all other religions are more or less in the grip of some evil influence. Everybody is a heretic to somebody else; but the pleasing feature about it all is—a man's professed religion is no true criterion of his character.

Most all religions agree that there is one Supreme Power, and practically all approach this Supreme Power through lesser powers, which range from the medium of Joshua-ben-Joseph, the Messiah of Christianity, on through Saints to the thousand spirits common to Hinduism. Most religions agree that there is a Heaven and a Hell. Details, however, differ according to the faith. Christianity, according to Revelation xxi, says in effect that Heaven has a jasper wall with twelve gates of pearl, and that the city itself is of pure gold. Mo-

hammedanism, according to the Koran LV, says that Heaven has shaded gardens in which are beautiful maidens for the pleasure of those males who in life were faithful. Conceptions of Hell range from the numerous infernos of Buddhism to a place of marrow-congealing cold according to some tribes of Eskimos.

While estimates on the numbers of believers in each creed are necessarily very inaccurate, the following is probably within ten percent of the truth:

Number of Believers.		Percentage of World's Population.
Confucianists	257,830,000	15.6%
Mohammedans	221,825,000	13.4
Hindus	210,540,000	12.8
Animists	158,270,000	9.9
Buddhists.....	138,031,000	8.4
Taoists	43,000,000	2.6
Shintoists	25,000,000	1.4
Hebrews	12,205,000	.7
Miscellaneous	15,280,000	.9
Roman Catholic	272,860,000	16.5
Protestants	171,650,000	10.4
Greek Orthodox	120,000,000	7.4
<hr/>		<hr/>
World's Population	1,646,491,000	100.

65.7% of world population is non-Christian.

34.3% of world population is Christian.

CONFUCIANISM

About 550 B.C., at a time when the civilizations of Greece and Rome were just beginning to bloom, and when the greater part of Europe and America was a wilderness in which semi-savage humans alternated between fighting ferocious animals and each other, China, as a nation under the Chow dynasty, had already been existing for nearly six hundred years. China consisted of numerous vassal kingdoms, each under a Marquis, and rivalries and jealousies prevailed among these rulers.

At this time, in the Kingdom of Lu, there was born of royal parents (whose fortune and power had declined through adversity) a son. This boy was afterwards called K'ung Fu-tze, or the master philosopher, in English—Confucius. His father died when Confucius was but a few years old, and at an early age the lad had to shift for himself. The stern realities of life produced in Confucius a very serious sort of a boy, and, by the time he was fifteen years old, he had decided to devote his life to producing a religio-philosophical system that would morally elevate humanity. He secured a mediocre political position as a corn market inspector, and at nineteen, in accordance with the then prevailing custom, he married.

At the age of twenty-three he decided to

teach certain principles by which he hoped to reform the corrupt government and ethics of his countrymen. The core of his system was, he said "The rectification of names." He maintained that good government would result only when the ruler was in every sense of the word a ruler; when the father was a father; the son a son—and each justly ruled the one beneath and obeyed the one higher up. He asserted that given the perfect ruler, there would result a perfect people, and Confucius believed that he himself by means of his teachings could produce a perfect ruler.

As was to be expected, many called him a fanatic. However, Confucius started his school and after twenty-seven years of diligent labor, during which time his ideas gained thousands of disciples, he was appointed as a sort of eliminator of crime in the Kingdom of Lu. In this capacity he was permitted to apply his theories of government, and, according to records, crime disappeared, the people were contented and Lu acquired considerable power over adjacent kingdoms.

The Marquis of Lu, however, began to tire of the Puritanical conduct which Confucius exacted in fact as well as in appearance. Several enemies of the Marquis of Lu, knowing his dissatisfaction and also his weaknesses, plotted against the Marquis and sent him a company of

beautiful girls, trained in the arts of dancing and fascination. The Marquis gave himself over to debauchery and then enlarged his harem. Confucius remonstrated and was informed to the effect that if he did not like it, he could resign.

So Confucius resigned and for thirteen years traveled around the country. Personally, he sought some royal personage who would accept him as counsellor, but though most of them admired both Confucius and his methods, his ideals were too rigid for them. His hopes faded to disappointment, and in the year 478 B.C. Confucius said to one of his disciples, "The great mountain must crumble. The strong beam must break. The wise man must wither away like a plant. No intelligent ruler arises to make me his teacher. My time has come to die." He went to bed, and after seven days expired. News of his death thrilled China. A popular demand arose for his teachings. They were written by disciples and are now part of the Sacred Books of China. They are zealously studied and often chapters are memorized.

It is doubtful that Confucius ever believed in a personal God. In connection with this, he once asked, "While you cannot serve men, how can you serve spirits?" As for immortality, he said, "While you do not know life, what can you know about death?" His conception of

wisdom was, "To give one's self earnestly to the duties due to men, and while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them."

Confucianism assumes that all men sincerely desire to be better and that they will take the trouble to find out how they can be made better; and Confucius himself tried to live in a manner, the example of which might be followed with only good results. He practiced his teaching, "Humility is the solid foundation of all virtues," and to those who complained of ill treatment advised, "Grieve not that men know not you, grieve that you know not men."

He maintained that the object of all government should be to make the people virtuous and contented. His religion, if it may be called that, is concerned only with the here and now, and might be summed up with his negative conception of the golden rule, "That which I do not wish others to put upon me, I also wish not to put upon others."

The majority of the 257,830,000 Confucianists are Chinese.

MOHAMMEDANISM

Mohammedanism is the name given in Christian countries to the religion founded about 610 A.D. by Mohammed. Followers call their creed Islam, and call themselves Moslems or Mussulmen. Their sacred book is the Koran, which means "the reading."

Mohammed was an Arabian and was born in Mecca, which is now in the land of Hedjaz along the east coast of the Red Sea. He was brought up by his uncle and later married a wealthy widow, for whom he also acted as a business manager. Mohammed was a keen business man with a propensity for religious meditation, even going so far as to occasionally retire into a cave near Mecca.

Finally, when Mohammed was about forty years old, visions appeared to him according to which he was appointed the apostle of a new religion called Islam, or entire submission to the decrees of Allah or God. For several months Mohammed felt that he must be but the victim of self-deception, but finally confided the revelations to his wife. She encouraged him, and with no difficulty whatever, Mohammed next converted several relatives and a few wealthy men of Mecca. However, ridicule and scorn came to be his lot and he began to fear again that he was the dupe of his own imagination. Often he mentioned these suspicions to his wife and followers but

they vigorously asserted that he was the true prophet.

Accordingly, Mohammed expounded that the creed of Islam was originally written in golden rays on a great tablet in Heaven, but had been revealed to him by the angel Gabriel. The vast majority of people called Mohammed foolish, but as he only met their jibes with calm silence, they began to wonder, as time went on, if there wasn't some truth in Islam after all. Gradually followers increased, and Mohammed dictated his teachings to a scribe. These, with further additions, produced the Koran as it is today.

Until he was fifty years old, Mohammed led a very rigid life. He had accepted persecution with fortitude. But in 621 A.D. when his wife died, he assumed an entirely different character. To advance his religion he decided to use force. His enemies plotted to assassinate him. Mohammed escaped. This incident is the Hejra, or flight, and is the date from which the Mussulmen commence their era.

Mohammed reached Medina, was favorably received and shortly after married his second wife, Ayesha. At this time she was not more than ten years old, but this is not exceptional in the torrid zones where females mature at the age of nine or ten. Then Mohammed proceeded to inject Islam into unbelievers with the point of a sword. He promised a vivid Hell

for those who opposed him, and a sensual Paradise for all who aided. Throughout the remainder of his life, evidence indicates that Mohammed gave himself over to licentiousness and slaughter. Although acknowledging Ayesha as his favorite, he had at least twenty acknowledged wives and many concubines. As the result of poisoning he died in 632 A.D.

Many believed that in a few days he would be resurrected, but as there was no such indication, believers decided that he would return to life in a thousand years. At the end of this time, 1632, there was no such appearance, so he was allowed another thousand years. The successors to Mohammed conquered all of northern Africa and Spain. During the ninth and tenth century, Moslem literature, art and science flourished. Moslem power, however, gradually declined, and the further growth of a united Islam nation was checked, when in 1258 the Moslem capital at Bagdad was taken and sacked by the Mongols.

From the year 1517 down to 1924, the spiritual head, or Caliph, of the Moslems was vested in the Sultan of Turkey. With the advent of the Turkish Republic, however, a separate Caliph was appointed. Mustafa Kemal Pasha, President of the Turkish Republic, deposed this Caliph and vested authority over the Moslems in the Turkish Parliament at Angora. Whether Abdul Medjid, the deposed Caliph, or some

other will contest this deposition remains for history. At present, the great mass of Moslems are under the sovereignty of Christian nations.

The Koran, for the most part, regulates all Moslem religious, civil, legal and military transactions. Some authorities believe that the Koran is the Hebrew and Christian scriptures adapted to the prejudices of Mohammed's countrymen. According to the Koran Allah is supreme. Jesus Christ has a place near Allah, but is no more important than Adam, Noah, Abraham and Mohammed. The Moslems do not believe that Christ was crucified, agreeing with the early Corinthians, Carpocratians and Basilidians—that it was not Christ, but one of his followers who looked like him, possibly Judas, who was crucified.

During his religious activities, Mohammed claimed that he made a trip to Heaven. According to this, he was one night with his wife Ayesha, when the angel Gabriel rapped on the door, and, after having been admitted, shook Mohammed by the hand and said that he was going to convey him to Heaven. A white horse named Alborak, which was used expressly for conducting prophets, awaited outside. When Mohammed attempted to mount the horse, the brute refused until Mohammed promised him (the horse) a seat in Heaven. Mohammed complied and on Alborak's back sailed off.

The first Heaven was of solid silver and in it dwelled Adam. Here also Mohammed saw the stars dangling by golden chains from the roof. The second Heaven was of pure gold and in it lived Noah. The third Heaven was of precious stones and Abraham dwelt therein. There were other Heavens, and finally one of Divine Light wherein was Jesus Christ.

Then along came an angel. He had 70,000 heads, in each head, 70,000 tongues, and each tongue uttered 70,000 distinct voices at once. In other words, this angel was capable of speaking simultaneously 343,000,000,000,000 words. Joys in Heaven for the faithful ranged from music, wine and maidens to beholding the face of Allah.

Let us recall that the Arabians are orientalists and often speak figuratively. Certainly such a Heaven is no more improbable than the Heaven of the Christian Bible, Revelation Chap. xxi, of which the foundations of the walls are garnished with gems, the gates are composed of pearls and the street is of gold.

The Moslem Hell is reserved for those who do not accept the Koran. The doomed are scheduled to drink boiling and stinking water, breathe nothing but hot winds and black smoke, and eat briars and thorns which will be in their stomachs as burning pitch.

The Koran condemns idolatry, the deification of human beings, intoxicating liquors and

images and pictures of living creatures. Prayers are to be said five times daily with the face turned toward Mecca. Giving of alms is obligatory. Modesty and the submission of women to men, the symbol of which is the veil, is insisted upon. Polygamy is countenanced, and a husband may divorce his wife by saying three times in the presence of witnesses, "I divorce you." It must not be concluded, however, that all those who call themselves Moslems accept the entire Koran. Many reject it except for the prayer, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His Prophet."

At the Moslem shrine at Mecca is a stone known as the Keblah. According to tradition it was originally brought from Heaven by the angel Gabriel, and at that time was a dazzling white color. When Mohammed touched the stone, however, it turned black. Today it is black and is the destination of the thousands of Moslem Pilgrims who go to Mecca every year. They kiss this stone, drink from the Holy Well of Zem-Zem, and perform these rites with the same sincere veneration that orthodox Christians bestow on their crucifixes and other objects associated with the memory of their sanctified martyrs and apostles.

The majority of the 221,825,000 Moslems reside in Turkey, Arabia, Egypt, Greece, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Herzegovinia, Tripolitania, Tunis, Persia, India and Morocco.

HINDUISM

Approximately 3,500 years ago, about the time Moses commanded the Israelites, and fully a thousand years before Confucius, there was written down in India a religio-philosophical code which was later called the Vedas. The authors of these Vedas were undoubtedly priests, or as they were termed Brahmans. As time went on other Brahmans interpreted the Vedas, made additional writings and gradually developed a mass of revelations or Shastras, which became the basis for the religious system now known as Hinduism or Brahmanism.

Unsympathetic orthodox Christians are apt to brand Hinduism as the wildest kind of polytheism or polydemonism, but Hinduism is primarily a monotheistic system, with its root in Brahma, the neuter universal power over all existence. Brahma, however, is considered to manifest itself in various forms, and as these forms are called by different names, the system does (especially among the ignorant) amount to pure polytheism.

The manifestation of Brahma in the sun is called Mitra; the manifestation of Brahma in the moon, Soma; in fire, Agni; in the heavens, Indra; in the dawn, Ushas—there are numerous others, and each of them is believed to have powers over certain portions of the universe or

qualities in man. In this manner, Indra is the lord of Swarga, the paradise in which dwell the pious after death.

Images, representing the manifestations of Brahma, are often kept in houses and when the family owning the images is wealthy, a priest is paid to come every morning, wake up the images, wash and dress them, offer them incense and food, return at evening, offer them supper, undress them and put them to bed. The same procedure is of course true when the images are kept in temples. It is reported that in one temple alone, the images daily are offered 400 pounds of rice, 350 pounds of butter besides milk, flour, treacle and other staples. The priests consume the food and believers know that they do, so that the ceremony amounts to a sort of combination sacrifice and priest fee.

Hindu images are usually ornate. A typical one is that of Vishnu, the spirit of Brahma who adjusts great physical and moral disorder. He is often represented as a four-armed man, each hand holding some symbolical article, and traveling on a monster half man and half bird.

Today, the beliefs of the numerous Hindu sects range from pure monotheism to pure idolatry. The Brahma-Samaj sect (Society of God) believes that there is one personal God, and that repentance and cessation from sin are the only ways to obtain forgiveness and salva-

tion. At the other extreme, the Sakta sect believes man is a passionate creature and that passion can only be destroyed by additional passion; hence, wine and sensuality are used in their religious ceremonies to such an extent that they become licentious orgies. The highest type of Hindu, however, is a pure theist and worships the special deity he chooses for the purpose of approaching the all highest and supreme Brahma. Such individuals, the result of centuries of education, culture and self-restraint, represent a superior type of man.

Quoted from Brahmanic scripture is the following: "Consider the supreme omnipresent intelligence as the sovereign Lord of the Universe, by whom alone it exists, an incomprehensible spirit; pervading all things . . . and causing them to pass through birth, growth and decay. . . . Thus the man who perceives in his own soul the supreme soul present in all creatures acquires equanimity toward them all, and shall be absolved at last in the highest essence, even that of the Almighty Himself."

The ignorant classes of Hindus, however, to whom such ideals are beyond comprehension, conduct their worship with many puerile superstitions, among which is the belief that sin can be atoned for by merely bathing in the Ganges River, or else repeating a text of the Vedas. The festival of Jagannatha (Juggernaut) is characteristic of this fetichism. At

this time a huge idol representing incarnations of Krishna and his brothers is mounted on a sixteen-wheeled car, and pilgrims, by means of ropes, struggle to drag the outfit through the streets, believing thereby that they will be assured of a place in Heaven.

It is often asserted in Christian countries that Hindu mothers frequently throw their children into the Ganges River to drown. This is an exaggeration. Children are frequently bathed in the Ganges, and even submerged for a brief moment similar to baptism, the belief being that the waters of the Ganges are a panacea for many illnesses and a guarantee against evil influences.

Hinduism accepts a doctrine of metempsychosis, according to which, after death the soul goes through various stages of purification until it is ultimately united with Brahma, the common source of all things. In connection with this is a system of transmigration according to which, for great sins, the soul is condemned to pass many times into the bodies of spiders, snakes, vegetables, dogs, etc. One who in life steals grain shall be born again as a rat; one who steals meat becomes a vulture; one who steals a woman becomes a bear; and one who kills a beast, unless he atones for it, will be punished by as many rebirths as there are hairs on the animal. To orthodox Hindus,

cows are especially sacred and are often kept in temples.

A distinctive feature of Hinduism, although not applicable to all sects, is the caste system. According to this, the Hindus are divided into hereditary classes, breeds or castes, among which are the Brahmas or priests; the military; the mercantile; the servile class, etc. These are further subdivided into hundreds of other castes, and no member of one caste may lawfully eat with any individual of another caste, or partake of food cooked by him, or marry into another caste family. He may, however, be a friend, master, partner or servant to a member of another caste. The whole arrangement produces a highly complicated social system, and is the cause of child marriages, by which children in the same caste, are at an early age, espoused to each other.

The majority of the 210,540,000 Hindus reside in India.

ANIMISM

Animism is the belief that every object contains a spiritual force or form, and that without this force or form the object could not exist. The term Animists is used here to mean those people who believe that the spiritual force in bodies is intelligent and that it should be worshipped because it may help or hinder man.

Animism, while not perhaps the earliest stage of religion, represents a belief from which practically all religions have evolved. The primitive savage, just as soon as he became conscious of existence, realized (though not perhaps clearly) that he was a spiritual force which manifested through a physical body. Seeing other individuals and objects, rocks, mountains, stars—he assumed that these similarly were but physical manifestations of spirits. All phenomena which could not be explained by apparent causes, were attributed to these unseen but still existing powers, which, depending on their nature, were to be either pleased or combated.

To this day, the Namaquas (tribes on the southwest coast of Africa) when a thunder-storm approaches, dip their arrows in poison and shoot at the lightning, and when the storm is over, fancy that they have assisted in the battle between Good and Evil Spirits.

Animism considers that man has at least two forms, a body and a soul. The soul is declared capable of leaving the body and visiting, tormenting and roaming—otherwise, asks the Animist, what is the cause of these phantoms which appear in sleep? The cause of death is attributed to the fact that the soul has wandered off and will not return to the body. In this connection, in the animist sections of China, when a man is unconscious and apparently dying, it is practice for a priest to hold the patient's coat, and, by incantations, implore the wayward spirit to return to the coat, so that it may be returned to the man who otherwise will die.

Powerful spirits are recognized in everything—trees, caves, brooks, queer shaped stones, sticks, etc. and all these are supposed to be connected with each other to form the one omnipresent omnipotent Power. This monotheistic power, however, is practically never worshipped for the reason that the savage is generally concerned with appeasing the powers which would eliminate him—disease, storms, catastrophes, enemies, drought, famine, etc.

Appeasing of the spirit which brings famine usually takes the form of human or animal sacrifice, and the flesh after slaughter is mixed with the soil. At such spots the often increased crops proves to the savage mind that the

Famine God has been pleased, although science would doubtless attribute it to the fertilizing action of the body.

Animist religions are replete with medicine men, witch doctors, shamans, clairvoyants, psychometrists and seers—and, through these mediums, believers feel they have communication with spirits and spiritual powers. In many cases, these wizards have proven their right to priesthood. Much of the ancient knowledge of the medicinal value of roots and herbs came from priests, or from those under the hypnotic spell of priests. It is said that Captain Jonathan Carver obtained from a Cree medicine-man a true prophecy of the arrival of news the next day at noon. Similarly, a traveler with two voyagers on the Coppermine River, was met by Indians of the very band he sought, these Indians having been sent by their medicine-man who had stated, concerning the white men, that—"He saw them coming and heard them talk on their journey."

The procedures whereby a youth joins an animist creed, and in reality the tribe itself, are often commendable. Among some Australian tribes, instead of the rather commonplace lessons in general ethics and worship, prevalent today in civilized countries, the youthful neophyte, after conquering his terror for bull-roarer, fire and knife is explicitly taught the duty due one's tribe, to oneself, defence of

MAJOR RELIGIONS

women and children, details of sex and marriage and the basis for the religious system in which he is instructed.

On the other hand, Animism cherishes other ideas less commendable. Souls of departed are believed capable of giving punishment or aid to those still living, so that among some tribes it is customary for a man who has slain his enemy, to cut off the corpse's right thumb, the motive being to prevent the enemy from throwing a spear at his conqueror.

After death, one is considered to still live a sort of semi-human existence. Any enemies one kills, are considered in the life hereafter to be one's slaves, which inspires the head-hunting Dyak of Borneo. It is frequently customary for wives, friends and servants of the deceased to be strangled, burned or buried alive, so that their spirits may accompany the deceased and enable him to pursue his new life in comfort. This is one reason (among others) why the Fiji Islanders objected so strenuously to the religion of Christian missionaries.

Attempts to defeat a continuance of the ordinary stations in life accounts for the refusal of the lower classes in Cochin-China to celebrate their Feast of the Dead on the same day that the upper classes do. They maintain that otherwise the aristocratic-souls might make the servant-souls carry home their presents for them.

Another belief common to Animism is that the sins of a man or tribe may, through the influence of a witch-doctor, be placed upon some individual or animal. After appropriate ceremonies, a goat may be brought in and through incantations and prayers, the sins placed upon the goat, or "scape-goat." The animal is then sent to the wilderness or else butchered. The present day saying that "so and so is the goat" is probably derived from this rite.

The estimated 158,270,000 Animists comprise mostly the tribes of the Eskimos, aboriginal Indians of North and South America, the tribes of Africa, Sumatra, Borneo, Java, Fiji Islands, New Guinea, Philippine Islands, New Zealand, Australia, and the innumerable small islands in the southern Pacific.

BUDDHISM

Buddhism is the religion founded about 500 B. C. by Siddartha Gautama. Gautama was an Indian prince, who believed himself capable of producing a religious system that would, to a greater extent than the then prevailing Hinduism, eliminate the misery, suffering and sorrow of humanity. At the age of about thirty, Gautama left his wife, son and the ease of court life and went into solitude. He practiced the Hindu asceticism and devoted himself almost exclusively to solitary contemplation.

His conduct attracted similar recluses, but after several years, finding that stoicism did not bring the desired peace Gautama deserted it. His admirers were disgusted at such heresy and left him. He tried a middle course but this only led to confusion. The whole turmoil, however, finally ceased, when, after many days of concentration Gautama arrived at the conclusions which he believed to be truth.

The theme of his system was—pain is inseparable from existence; therefore, cessation from existence or Nirvana is the end which man should seek. Gautama went to Benares, won back his disciples, and then proceeded to spread his doctrines. At one time he had several hundred thousand apostles. They called

him Buddha, meaning "the enlightened one," and this gentle leader never wearied of traveling about, telling his message and rejoicing as converts were won. He was respected, honored, protected and loved, and finally died at the age of eighty.

He himself never wrote down his philosophy, and the Buddhist canon today is the result of several councils, the latest held around 200 B. C. Buddhism is one of the few religions which has not propagated its doctrines by force. It attempts to install a system of morality and kindness without belief in any god.

According to its precepts there is no value in prayer because the deities are powerless to alter the laws of cause and effect in the universe to suit individuals. Since Buddha died, however, he has been raised to such an exalted position by his followers, that prayers are offered to him. In common with most religions, stories sprang up of his having been born of a Virgin, and images were made of him.

Buddhism maintains that so long as being exists, it will suffer pain, because it has wants which reach to infinity. Nirvana, the antithesis of being, is the goal of every Buddhist. To achieve Nirvana, one must be free from superstition, must be sincere, must be mentally active in meditation on the realities of life, must not destroy life, must neither steal, lie, drink intoxicating liquors, nor indulge in un-

lawful sexual intercourse. Those who practice these precepts do not immediately upon death achieve Nirvana, but they are on the right road.

Depending upon how their good deeds balance their evil deeds, the prospect for Nirvana at death immediately is born into another shape. If the prospect has been good he may take the form of a spirit. If he has been wicked he may be reborn as a dog, a slave, a plant or even a stone. If the prospect has been very wicked, he will be born into one of the numerous (at least 136) hells, and will require millions of years before he will once more attain earthly existence. The law by which acts in one life produce results in the succeeding life, is called Karma.

Buddhism maintains that evil is caused by ignorance, the sort of ignorance which causes man to attribute permanence and reality to material things. Incidentally, such a concept, formulated as it was some 2,400 years ago, is today commonplace. In other words, what we see is only apparent. Absolute reality is entirely different. Solidity, for one example, is an illusion because objects are composed of atoms which do not touch and are in perpetual motion.

While Buddhism is undoubtedly lofty in its ideals, the worship of Buddha especially among

the lower classes assumes the form of idolatry, as many as thirty-five lesser Buddhas being acknowledged powerful along with the original Buddha. The exhortation not to destroy life is often carried to extremes. In some sects the monks fear to move or breathe freely lest they kill some of the vermin on their bodies. Institutions are established for the exclusive use of rats, and monks are provided with strainers for water, so that they will not partake of and kill the living organisms in the water.

The estimated 138,031,000 Buddhists live in Ceylon, Siam, Burma, Nepal, Tibet, Anam, Mongolia, Java, China, Japan and India.

TAOISM

Taoism is the religion founded about 575 B. C. by the Chinese philosopher, Li-Urh, who was a contemporary with Confucius. He was afterwards called Lao-tze, which means "the old philosopher," or "the old son." He was a librarian to the King of Chow, and is credited with having written the Tao Teh King (The Path to Virtue) which is the scripture of Taoism.

Little else that is reliable is known of Lao-tze, although like all other religious teachers there are innumerable myths concerning his life, which are sincerely believed by many of his followers. According to one widely accepted story, Lao-tze's mother conceived supernaturally and he was carried in her womb for about seventy-five years, so that when he was born, his hair was white. Similar stories tell us that Lao-tze never died, but went into the wilderness and was taken up to heaven alive.

As to the genesis of his doctrines, Lao-tze looked at nature and saw that it was free from self-effort and enthusiasm. He decided that as man was a part of nature, man could only accomplish his intended purpose by following nature, that is, by imitating infinity, or the Tao. According to Taoism, he who submits to others controls them. One should not be enthusiastic and forever trying to do good, be-

cause nothing like this is seen in the forces of nature. As noted in the Tao Teh King, "It is the way of Tao (Infinity) not to act from any personal motive; to conduct affairs without feeling the trouble of them; to taste without being aware of the flavor; to account the great as small and the small as great; to recompense injury with kindness."

The Taoist believes that man is composed of two essential principles, one material and the other spiritual. The material self perishes after death. The spiritual self is everlasting. In its early form Taoism was silent as to what happened to a wicked man after death, but at present the belief in hell is accepted. A union with the harmony of the infinite is the reward to those who in life practiced the Tao.

Chapter LXV of the Tao Teh King is especially interesting since it is so different from our present day tendency to disseminate knowledge. It reads—"The difficulty in governing the people arises from their having too much knowledge, and therefore he who tries to govern a state by wisdom is a scourge to it, while he who does not try to govern thereby, is a blessing."

One of the broadest exhortations of Taoism is—"Let us forget the conflict of opinions. Let us make our appeal to the infinite, and take up our position there." Such lofty ideas, however, are missing in much of the present day

Taoism. There is a system of polytheism, monasteries, temples and priests. The priests are supposed to help the people follow the Tao, but their assistance is usually so mixed up with magic, superstition and divination, that they terrorize the people into subjection. For example, as is prevalent in some Christian sects, it is believed by many Taoists that souls of the departed may only gain release from Hell through the prayers of priests, for which service they are paid substantial fees.

The Taoist papacy, originally started about 50 A. D. is looked upon as the infallible head of the religion. He resides in Kiang-si, China.

Practically all the 43,000,000 Taoists are Chinese and Tibetans.

SHINTOISM

Shintoism is a combination religious and patriotic system which has been practiced in Japan for at least two thousand years. The Japanese equivalent of Shinto is Kami-no-Michi, which may be translated "Way of the Kami" or "Way of the Good Spirits." In its early form, Shintoism was comparatively simple. There were believed to be spirits or Kami, who presided over all activities and institutions and it was considered that every Japanese would act right if he only consulted his own conscience and obeyed the Mikado.

The system, however, gradually became more complicated. About 712 A. D. was written the Kojiki, which has been called The Japanese Bible, and later appeared "Chronicles of Japan." These books form the basis of much of the present day Shintoism. According to them, in the beginning was Isanagi and his wife Isanami, who through intercourse produced the Islands of Japan and the progenitors of the Japanese race. There are accounts of various Gods and Goddesses, chief among which is the great sun-goddess, Amaterasu, the reputed grandmother of Tenny, the first emperor of Japan.

That the present emperor is a direct descendant from Amaterasu is taught in schools, and similar chauvinism is prevalent in practically

all Japanese primary readers, histories, geographies and music. The International Educational Association of Japan, however, has recently decided to censor all text books and eliminate whatever is detrimental to the cultivation of international ideals and sentiments; which idea might be well copied by all nations.

Shinto does not aim to guide individuals. Man is supposed to consult his conscience. It is rarely that one finds instructions such as are said to have been uttered by the God Fujiyama, who resides in the celebrated volcano of that name, and recorded by Nitobe, "Ye men of mine! Shun desire . . . you will ascend to the level of the gods. Every little yielding to anxiety is a step away from the natural heart of man. If one leaves the natural heart of man, he becomes a beast. That men should be made so, is to me intolerable pain and unending sorrow."

The Shintoist does not, says Nitobe, "pray for forgiveness of sins, but for the sweet things of this life; for happiness, but not for blessedness." The principle of obedience to the Emperor is not so jingoistic as one might suppose, for he is controlled by a House of Commons elected for the most part by the people. Few Shintoists believe that there exists a Hell, because they cannot conceive of their ancestors as having been so base as to deserve such treatment.

Man after death, according to Shintoism, is believed to join the Kami or spirits who preside over sewing needles, furnaces, kitchens, whirlwind, lightning, sun—practically every imaginable activity, article and institution. The deceased then should be revered, so in many Japanese homes there are places set aside for tablets of the deceased, before which are offered prayers and sacrifices.

Shinto shrines are usually very plain, being of white wood and roofed with thatch. Inside the building are, usually concealed from public gaze, objects wherein are believed to reside the spirit of the enshrined Kami. Before each shrine are one or more torii. These are archways formed of two vertical posts, with a projecting bar across the top, beneath which is another cross bar, the ends of which do not project.

The present religions of Japan include Confucianism, Christianity, Shintoism and Buddhism. To the educated classes, the findings of science have discredited many of the ancient legends, as has been the case with all religions. At a census taken several years ago at the Imperial University of Tokio, about 4,500 out of 5,000 students stated that they were either atheists or agnostics.

The estimated 25,000,000 Shintoists reside almost exclusively in Japan.

JUDAISM

Judaism is the religion of the Hebrews, also called Jews and Israelites. Judaism recognizes one God, also known as Yahweh, Jehovah or Lord. This is the same God who is worshipped by the Christians. The chief difference between Hebrews and Christians is that the Hebrews do not accept Jesus Christ as an intermediary between them and God.

There are many conflicting stories and myths connected with the origin of Judaism. Much concerning Abraham, the presumed ancestor of the Hebrews, Isaac, Jacob and the early life of the people is obscure, but it seems that the Hebrews were at first tribes wandering about the countries now known as Turkey in Asia and Arabia, each tribe apparently having its own religion.

About 1500 B. C. a Hebrew by the name of Moses, then living in Egypt, became angered at an outrage committed by an Egyptian on an Israelite. Moses slew the Egyptian, the crime became known and Moses fled to Arabia. He met and married Zipporah, the daughter of a priest of the wandering tribe known as the Kenites. Moses heard of this tribe's God, who was called Yahweh, and as related in Exodus of The Bible, was directed by Yahweh, who appeared "in a flame of fire out of the midst of

• a brush," to return to Egypt, unite the Israelites and lead them to the promised land of Canaan where they were to dwell and become a great nation.

There are numerous stories connected with this departure. At first the monarch of Egypt refused to let the people go, but after ten plagues on the land, he consented, but followed with an army, planning to annihilate them. When Moses at the head of the Israelites came to the Red Sea, the waters parted and, in a single night, he and his followers passed across, but when the Egyptian army followed, the waters closed and the army was drowned.

The Israelites camped on Mt. Sinai and here according to tradition Moses received the ten commandments and the laws for the regulation of the lives of the Hebrews. Moses died before the Israelites reached Canaan, and where he is buried is unknown. Joshua succeeded Moses and the Jewish nation expanded, passing under a series of military leaders, Barak, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Samuel, Saul and finally David, who was a revolutionist. David's son was Solomon, whose reign represented the Hebrew nation at its zenith. Polygamy was still customary and Solomon had some thousand wives and concubines.

Solomon's splendor had caused heavy taxation on the people and when Solomon's son,

Rehoboam, succeeded, the people with Jereboam demanded that the taxes be lessened. Rehoboam replied scornfully, whereupon ten tribes revolted and set up a separate Kingdom of Israel under Jereboam, which however ceased to exist about 722 B. C. when the inhabitants were conquered by the Assyrians. Rehoboam's Kingdom of Judah continued down to 588 B. C. when it was captured by Nebuchadnezzar and many of the people sent captives to Babylon.

Babylon in turn was taken some fifty years later by the Persian King Cyrus. Then came Alexander the Great, numerous struggles and finally indiscriminate slaughter of all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, because they insisted in clinging to their worship of one supreme God. Ultimately, the Romans conquered Jerusalem, and in A. D. 26 Pontius Pilate was appointed Procurator of Judea.

Then appeared according to some traditions, the Hebrew—Joshua-ben-Joseph of Nazareth, generally known as Jesus, and it must be recalled that at this time the Romans were ever in fear of insurrection of the Jews. As a teacher, Jesus was accepted by the Jews. Thousands flocked to him and many believed him to be the long promised King who would throw off the Roman yoke.

Jesus, however, believed himself not to be their temporal King but their spiritual King,

and through whom they could only obtain salvation. The majority of Jews, essentially monotheistic, revolted at the thought of another lesser God, and decided that he was a fanatic.

One of Jesus' disciples, Judas, who had evidently planned on a position when Jesus became King, was disgusted, and told the officials that Jesus was going to set himself up as King of the Jews. Jesus was brought before Pilate.

He was asked, "Art thou King of the Jews?"

And Jesus replied, "Thou sayest it."

Still Pilate could not believe that one so meek was a rebel against the Roman Empire. The surrounding mob, however, enraged at Jesus' intimation that he was a divine intermediary, shouted "Crucify Him." So Pilate ordered the prisoner crucified. In mockery Jesus was dressed in purple and crowned with a wreath of thorns. Then he was executed on the cross, a method common at that time for all felons.

The acceptance of this story depends upon one's belief; however, it represents the trend of events usually accepted. Today there are many scholars who, after considerable careful investigation, have concluded that the crucifixion of Jesus is unsubstantiated by fact and is entirely mythical. Incidentally, the birth date of Jesus was not settled until after 500 A. D. and the reputed virgin birth, guiding star,

miracles, betrayal, crucifixion and resurrection have their mythical counterpart in many eastern religions which flourished and vanished to oblivion long before Christianity was ever thought of.

This much, however, is certain. In 70 A. D. Vespasian, the tool of Nero, destroyed Jerusalem and thenceforth the Jews became scattered. Since then, their history has been a history of persecutions. During the Crusades and The Spanish Inquisition thousands of Jews were indiscriminately tortured, burned and strangled. They have scattered into all countries, but still persist in their worship of the one and only God, the Yahweh of a tribe which roamed Arabia more than three thousand years ago.

The pervading principle then of Judaism is monotheism. In addition to this, one must follow the ten commandments or decalogue, according to which, one should not bow down before images; should keep the Sabbath free from unnecessary work; be a credit to one's parents; and not commit adultery, murder, theft or bear false witness against another.

Hebrews do not believe that man is a fallen creature, but a creature rising toward a better stage, and that they are the chosen people of God because it has been their mission to acquaint every man with the fact that he is a child of God. But Hebrews have no mission-

aries. Beliefs in future reward and punishments are for the most part left to individual opinion. There are no marked sects in Jewry, the deepest rift coming between the Reform and Orthodox Jews. The Reform Jews inspect their creed and reject that which they consider unnecessary, while the Orthodox Jews concern themselves with maintaining the old rituals and beliefs.

The sacred books of Judaism are the Old Testament and the Talmud. Both were written by Jewish Rabbis. Much of the Old Testament is believed to be mythical, but they consider the book to be man's more or less true record of the "hand of God in the slow and toil-some ascent of the people from the lower levels of nascent worship of one God out of many, to the lofty heights of ethical worship of the one God of all mankind."

The Jews accept the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of Man, and the establishment on earth of a democracy which involves worldwide cooperation for the common good; but they absolutely reject the literal doctrine of attaining salvation through Jesus of Nazareth, or any of the ritual connected with it.

Zionism is the movement among the Hebrews for the establishment of a Jewish nation in Palestine, and has been countenanced by the British government, which captured the country from the Turks.

The estimated 12,205,000 Hebrews are scattered throughout the world. About 3,000,000 are citizens of the United States, and of this about 1,450,000 live in New York City. In Russia are about 6,000,000; in Austria about 1,300,000 and in Poland about 1,600,000.

MISCELLANEOUS RELIGIONS

If about eighteen hundred years ago, these chapters had been written in Rome, they would have given prominence to the Roman Gods, who at that time would have been considered all powerful, because they had guided the Roman Empire to its position of world supremacy. In the miscellaneous account might have been a sentence or two about the Christians.

There would also have been detailed the Persian, Greek and Egyptian religions—but today, all that remains of their temples, oracles, scriptures and priesthood are a few weather-beaten, moss and brush covered ruins, and a maze of records many of which are unintelligible. From these ruins rise the very creed their builders despised—Christianity. So in turn today, the very religions we list among the miscellaneous, may sometime lead the world in its progress toward ultimate perfection.

There are perhaps thousands of religions current today, and we interpret religion as the beliefs which respective classes of men have toward any infinite power. We can mention only a very few of these minor religions.

Bahaism—Eighty years ago, 1844, in Persia, a man by the name of Mirza-Ali-Mohammed (not the Mohammed of Islam) declared himself to be "The Bab," meaning the one who

would lead believers to salvation. He aimed to unite the people of all religions without requiring them to desert their previous religions; and among other principles, stood for the substitution of arbitration for war, woman suffrage, monogamic marriage and a universal language.

His followers numbered millions which aroused the animosity of the Mohammedans, the Christians and particularly the Turkish government. He was arrested on a charge of causing a political disturbance, was suspended over the wall of the city of Tabriz, and shot to death. His followers were persecuted, and by 1881, numerous tales were circulated as to "The Bab's miracles, which, however, according to original records of his life, never happened. The Babist movement, or Bahaism, as it is now called, has spread and has numerous followers even in the United States.

Parsees—In India are the Parsees, the last remnants of the millions of followers of Zarathustra. They reverence the power of fire and their God is called Ormuzd. They consider the smoking of tobacco, or any unnecessary fire as blasphemy. Benevolence is their first principles and in the city of Bombay alone, they finance more than thirty charitable institutions.

A particularly interesting feature of their religion is their method of disposing of the dead. In a beautiful garden on Malabar Hill

are erected "Towers of Silence." These towers are of stone, about twenty feet high, and inside is a grating. The top of the tower is open and in the park are vultures. Prayers are said over the deceased and the body is placed in the tower on the grating. The mourners withdraw. The vultures denude the body of flesh, and the bones drop through the grating into a subterranean chamber.

Sikhs—About 1500 there was established in northwestern Hindustan the religion of the Sikhs. Nanak Shah founded this creed, which worships "the one and only true God." They rejected the Mohammedan and Brahmanic faiths and were persecuted, but by the strength of their sword-arms maintained existence, until now they number about 2,000,000.

* * * *

Today, in China, is a man by the name of Tang-Huang-Chang, who announces himself as the founder of the last great religion, which he calls the "Great Union of World Religions." He predicts that in the very near future will occur numerous earthquakes, storms, tidal waves and plagues, from which about one-third of the human race will perish, but that the remainder will be saved through his power.

In addition to the above theists, are the deists, atheists and agnostics. A deist is one who believes in the existence of God, but not in revealed religion.

quarrels between the members. In this very

An atheist is one who believes that there is no God. Their reasoning may be like this: If God exists, he would be merciful to man. Why is it then, that all these millions of sincere believers in God slaughter each other? Why are so many of them wretched? Why do innocent children often suffer agony? Certainly, there is no God, otherwise He would not permit these things.

An agnostic is one who contends that man can know nothing about God. The agnostic reasons that the mind of man is limited to a knowledge of phenomena, and what is relative; and that therefore the infinite, the absolute, the unconditioned is beyond range of man's comprehension.

CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is that religion which is based upon the teachings of Joshua-ben-Joseph of Nazareth, now known as Jesus. He was a Hebrew, who announced, and whose acts convinced followers, that he was the Messiah or Christ predicted in the Old Testament of the Hebrews.

Although the facts of his birth and life are much disputed by both non-believers and Christians themselves, the general trend is that on December 25, B. C. 4, there was born in Bethlehem, a boy who in later life distinguished himself by performing miracles. He was very popular with the Jewish people and many thought that he was the King, the Deliverer who would free them from the Roman yoke. Jesus, however, declared that he was their spiritual King, and this led to his crucifixion. Later he is believed to have risen from the dead and to have been visibly taken up into Heaven.

A few years after Christ's departure, those who believed in him started a church and spread his teachings throughout Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia, Greece and Rome. The early Christian church was essentially a Hebrew church, and only Hebrews were admitted to the new faith. This practice however was abandoned after numerous

brief history of Christianity, we can only record the acts of those who called themselves Christians.

About 65 A. D. Peter, who had been one of Christ's disciples, founded a Christian church at Rome. About this time another Christian church was established in Greece. The Roman Church spoke Latin, and the Greek Church spoke Greek, and each had its Bishop. The former was the Bishop of Rome, and the latter was the Bishop of Constantinople. Gradually, each Bishop became the center of authority for similar speaking churches, and slowly there developed two separate theological systems, alike in general ideals, but differing in numerous details—such as the procession of the Holy Spirit, leavening of bread, etc.

The two churches had many quarrels and several times the Bishops excommunicated each other—excommunication is the exclusion of a Christian from the spiritual privileges of the Church. The controversies became more heated, and the churches separated definitely about 1054. The Roman Catholic—or Roman Universal Church recognized as its visible ecclesiastic head, the Bishop of Rome, also called the Pope. The Greek Church—full name, Holy Oriental Orthodox Apostolic Church—recognized as its head the Bishop of Constantinople, also called the Patriarch. Practically no great sects have further developed

from the Greek Church, its doctrines having been revised or else construed in such manner that further branching was unnecessary.

As Christianity, under the influence of missionaries, continued to spread, the power of the Pope increased. Kings were crowned with the sanction of the Pope, territory over which the Pope exercised authority was awarded him, and with the power of excommunicating towns as well as nations, the authority of the Popes became formidable. Abuses arose.

In Palestine, Christians were being persecuted by the Mohammedans (vice versa according to the Mohammedans) and around 1096, with the approval of the Christian Church an army of 150,000 European Christians, bearing on their shields the sign of the cross, started out to conquer Palestine. These soldiers were called Crusaders. They reached Asia Minor, took Antioch and then after reverses conquered Jerusalem in 1099. Of their original 150,000 men, 20,000 survived. Similar expeditions continued off and on for the next hundred years. At times the Kings personally led their armies. A Christian Kingdom was established in the Holy Land, but this was annihilated in 1291 by the Sultan of Egypt.

Heretics began to spring up everywhere, notably in Spain, and around 1481 there was instituted the Inquisition, which lasted for about 200 years. The Inquisition was an

ecclesiastic court established for the examination and punishment of heretics. Penalties of this court ranged from the wearing of the sanbenito, a coarse gown with a cross on the breast, and the back painted over with devils; to the auto-da-fe, the ceremony of burning the heretic publicly. The auto-da-fe was usually held on a Sunday. The victim was asked in what faith he would die. Those who answered "Catholic" were first strangled. The others were burned alive. There were at least 200,000 victims of the Inquisition of which 32,000 were burned. Most of the victims were Hebrews, Mohammedans and political prisoners.

It must be recalled that to this time all Christians were either Roman-Catholic or Greek-Orthodox. The Inquisition, however, together with other abuses (many of which were plainly political schemes under the cloak of religion) did not meet with the approval of many Christians. Then came the Renaissance, which was the transition from the middle ages to the modern, and characterized by a revolution in the world of art, literature, exploration (Columbus' voyages), astronomy, and numerous inventions like printing and gunpowder. People began to have more confidence in their own powers of thought.

Imbued with the spirit of the times, in 1517 there arose a German Roman Catholic monk and Professor of Theology, Martin Luther, who

soundly criticized the actions of Johann Tetzel, another monk, whose conduct was not in keeping with his ecclesiastic position. The affair culminated when Luther wrote down his criticisms and nailed them to the church door in Wittenberg. Luther urged the Pope to put a stop to Tetzel's actions and the corrupt practices of the Church in general. After many arguments, he was excommunicated.

Luther then started his own Church, and his followers were called Protesters, Protestants or Lutherans. These events commenced the numerous revolts from the Roman Catholic Church, now known as the Reformation. Christendom divided into three great branches, still existing, the Protestant, the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox. The Protestants are now recognized as those Christians who do not acknowledge the authority of the Popes of either the Roman Catholic or the Greek Orthodox Churches.

Luther's ideas were not acceptable to all Protestants, and after numerous wars, massacres and persecutions—directed not only at the Roman Catholic but against each other, they divided into Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists and Episcopalians, and these in turn into other sects. Many left Europe and came to America. Of the Protestants were the Puritans who landed in Massachusetts in 1620. They came so that they might worship according to

their conscience, and in their turn persecuted those who did not worship as they did. Gradually, however, the general disorder quieted down, until at present there is comparative physical peace between the various sects.

Christianity is now, however, facing its most serious problem, namely, the findings of scientific research. Some Christians believe that Christianity is not a theological system of dogmas, ritual and worship, but rather an attitude toward life—and these Christians find no difficulty in adjusting themselves to the facts of research. Other Christians believe that many results of science are fallacies, because they are discredited by the Scriptures. In 1633, Galileo was persecuted because he expounded the Copernican system of astronomy (by which the earth went around the Sun) because this idea disagreed with the Bible. Humbolt, Bruno, Darwin, Haeckel, Buechner, Spencer, Huxley, Fichte, Kant—the list might be continued—all were similarly criticised, and in our own times, in the United States, North Carolina and several other states forbid the study of the theory of evolution.

The main tenets of Christianity are—belief in one God, belief in the saving power of Jesus Christ and belief that the Bible is a revelation. The foregoing are of course not true of all sects, but represent the general attitude. The Apostles Creed, written probably during the

fourth century and today typical of orthodox views, is as follows: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hell; the third day he rose again from the dead, He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of Sins; the Resurrection of the body, and the Life Everlasting. Amen."

The more liberal Christians, however, bind themselves to no such creeds as in the last paragraph. The Unitarians, for example, accept the religion of Jesus, and believe, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man. They accept in their working fellowship any who, while differing from them in belief, is in general sympathy with their spirit and practical aims.

A distinctive feature of Christianity is that the passage of the soul into Heaven is possible only through Jesus Christ. According to this belief, God created the first man and woman perfect, placed them in the Garden of Eden and

told them not to eat certain fruit. The woman saw the fruit, ate of it and also gave some to the man. They thus disobeyed God, and all men and women henceforth inherited this sin. When Jesus Christ came on earth, however, his character was so splendid that God bestowed on him the power to award everlasting life to those, who, before death, acknowledged belief in Christ's saving power. Some Christians, however, construe the story figuratively and and believe that one is saved from oblivion, by accepting and practicing the spiritual truths which Christ uttered.

This belief in Christ, or accepting of Christ motivates the ceremony of Communion, also known as the Sacrifice of the Mass. In this, a small quantity of bread and wine are, through various rites, believed to be changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, so that the partaker, or Eucharist, believes that he receives Jesus Christ literally into his own system. Some sects believe that they only acquire the spiritual attitude of Christ, while a few sects omit the ceremony entirely.

The Roman Catholic Church is probably the most unified organization in Christendom, and it represents 272,860,000 Christians, i.e. 48.3% of all Christians. The Holy Oriental Orthodox Apostolic Church represents 120,000,000 Christians, i.e. about 21.3% of all Christians. The Protestant Churches represent about 171,560,-

000 Christians, i.e. about 30.4% of all Christians.

The visible head of the Roman Catholic Church is the Pope at Rome, who is appointed by a senate of seventy cardinals. When the Pope speaks *ex-cathedra*, that is when he discharges his ecclesiastical duties, he is regarded by many (though not all Catholics) as infallible, because in the words of the Vatican Council (1870) he, "by the divine assistance promised to him by the blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that His church should be endowed for defining doctrines regarding faith or morals."

Other tenets of the Christian Church are belief in purgatory and the invocation of Saints; however, some sects do not recognize these doctrines. Purgatory is an intermediate state after death in which the souls of the righteous make reparations through temporary suffering for those sins committed in life and not fully atoned for before death. These souls are assisted to Heaven by the "suffrages of the faithful, but especially by the most acceptable sacrifice of the mass."

The invocation of Saints is the appeal to Saints for help and aid from God. Saints in the Roman Catholic Church are those persons whose lives have been deemed so noble and pious, that after examination of the candidate by the Congregation of Rites, and subsequent

recommendation, the Pope beatifies them, that is, appoints them Saints.

Many of the Christian churches, like the Episcopal and Roman Catholic, utilize images which range from small figures to costly, jeweled, gold and ornate affairs—representing Christ in agony on the cross, Saints, the Virgin Mary, etc. Three thousand such images are sometimes used in a single cathedral, although believers are cautioned not to worship them.

The Bible is the foremost book of Christianity. Its first part is the Old Testament of the Hebrews, and is mainly a history of them written by numerous rabbis. The second part of the Bible is the New Testament, and, as it is today, relates the life of Jesus, his teachings and an apocalypse.

The apocalypse, called the Revelation, has probably excited more attention than any other book. It was, according to the opinion generally accepted, written by John, about 68 A.D. at one of the most appalling hours in the world's history. Rome had been burned at Nero's instigation and the Christians had been blamed for this act. They were slaughtered by thousands. The Hebrews, too, had been taunted into insurrection, so that the Roman soldiers would have an excuse to kill them. Seared walls existed where cities stood. Corpses existed instead of people.

John had either escaped or else was banished to the Island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. He wrote to encourage his brethren, Christians and Hebrews, those who believed in one God, to comfort them in their hour of strife when their very existence depended upon common faith in their God and the strength of their sword arms.

He writes that an angel appeared to him, although one must recall that "angel" at that time also meant "thought." This angel instructed him to write of the things which he saw, and the "things which must shortly come to pass." Accordingly, John gives counsel to the churches, and then goes on to relate in a symbolic manner (or a literal manner according to one's belief) of the triumph of God's justice that was to come only after severe struggle.

The Christian Bible is not the same for all sects. The Council of Trent in 1546 decided what the Roman Catholic Bible should contain; and by 1600 the Protestants had decided what they considered scripture. However, both parties, in making their decisions rejected numerous other books, many of which at one time had been considered part of the Bible. Since then the various Bibles have remained substantially unchanged, which to modern believers engenders the idea that their particular Bible has come down in its present form from the time of Christ. This has produced the attitude

that the Bible is infallible, that is, that it is without any error whatsoever, the whole thing having been revealed by God to the men who wrote it. This idea has motivated the recent controversies and heresy trials between Fundamentalists who declare that the Bible is infallible; and the Modernists who declare that the Bible is not infallible.

Fundamentalists base their claim partly on the verses in Revelation, which say—"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things (or take away as noted next verse) God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." Fundamentalists implicitly believe that the entire Bible is the word of God, and that those who do not believe all of the Bible, consequently doubt God.

Modernists base their claim of fallibility on investigation of the Bible itself, science and history. They reverence God and the teachings of Christ, but after sincere investigation doubt that the Bible is the word of God. Some have arrived at the conclusion that Christ's reputed miracles are unsupported by the facts of history, and also that the Bible itself is contradictory.

For example, if anyone will take the Book of Genesis (The King James Version of the Bible) and copy in one column those portions calling the deity God, and in another column those

portions calling the deity Lord God, there will result two complete accounts of the creation and the flood, each presenting different stories, differing in important details. After sincere investigation, this writer finds nothing in or out of the Bible that proves the book infallible, or even asserts itself to be infallible.

One of the most ancient existing Bibles, is the one which in 1475 was placed in the Vatican Library at Rome. Little definite is known of its history before that time, but it was probably written not later than 300 A.D. Its words are written continuously, without breaks, accents or punctuation. (The present separation in chapters and verses is quite modern.) Its language is Greek and it includes some parts not in present Bibles, and also omits some books in present Bibles.

In the past, Christianity has been made to depend largely upon the miracles of its founder and the infallibility of the Bible, rather than upon the practicability of the teachings of Christ. What the teachings of Christ really are is a mooted question. The writer's opinion is—that Christianity is a spirit, an attitude which exhorts men to rise above small grudges, by treating enmity with kindness; but at the same time to rise in indignation against great wrongs or evils. In this connection, Christ may be considered a Saviour, because his teach-

ings and all similar teachings save man from gross materialism.

Rumors, often unfounded, persist among Christians that each sect is intent on annihilating the other sects; but the hope of civilization is that the common sense and intelligence of the majority of people will overcome such feeling; so that through reason, confidence and peace, Christ's ideal—The Brotherhood of Man, shorn of all dogma, ritual and fanaticism—will become reality.

There are estimated to be 564,510,000 Christians in the world and they represent about one-third of the human race.

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